Dear Ed, 8/28/74

The paranoids are like a self-fulfilling prophesy. They make it impossible for responsible people, most of all elected politicians, to have anything to do with them abd then they say, "See! This is proof!"

Their awful stuff so obviously incredible and so easily refuted lends itself ideally to flashing behind the scenes as proof that nobody is responsible, knows anything, even as support of the unsupportable.

On the size of any conspiracy, once you decide it was not composed of nuts who hadn't the remotest idea how to do what was done, then Occam gives the answer. The simplest solution is the smallest number consistent with success.

I don't think this can be compared with the size of the conspiracy to obstruct justice in The Watergate.

Colson: unless you understand that the only Christ he found was in the White House you'll never understand what he did. Or that the important need he had was to immunize himself, even if it meant going to jail. The worst on him is not yet out. He hasn't laid a finger on Nixon, hasn't said a word that canbe used against Nixon in court, has really been defending him. His attack on the CIA is unfactual whereas a factual one can be made and hasn't been. Or, it, too, collapses alone and unassisted.

Anxiety for the easy answers and explanations that just do not exist drives us to improvise in our desire for answers.

This and their shock value is what gives the paranoids an audience.

Best,